

September 27, 1962

Dear Mrs. Shriver

I thought you might be interested to have a copy of the detailed research proposal covering our plans for the next two years, as embodied in our resubmission to the NIH. I am very much depressed about the long range outlook for the pattern of support of creative research by the NIH, but have every reason to believe that our immediate problems on this program have been patched up, though this took a lot of time I would have preferred to spend more constructively.

I have been able to pry loose some space to set up a neurochemistry laboratory to start my own work in this direction (this is outlined in the enclosure). Miss Nancy Martin, who comes from several years experience at CalTech appears to be an extremely able woman, and has started working as a research assistant for me on this project. So I think it is fair to see we have in effect launched our research program that we have in mind to pursue far more aggressively when the facilities of the new Kennedy Laboratories are built. The planning on these is moving ahead quite rapidly and smoothly.

Also enclosed is some material that I am also forwarding through Dr. Targan and Dr. Kety as a fuller and more precise statement of position on the outlook of biological research. Needless to say, I would also be grateful for your own backing for the inclusion of these remarks in the final report of the panel.

As I continue to think about the problem, I reach the feeling that mental retardation may be recognized as a challenge, not only to remedy these disorders, but to provoke us to answer how to extend the bounds of human intellectual capacity in general. There are many hints of experiments that might be tried in this direction; surprisingly little experimental work has been done to modify the extent of cerebral development by prenatal treatments. I may be putting together some thoughts on this for a paper, and if so will of course send you a copy.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

Enc: NIH/Neurobiology 8/31/62
Targan/Kety 8/26/62

Shriver/Kennedy